THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G.VENKATRAM AN): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The Government have received representations from Dr. P. Pullarao requesting for setting up of rest area and for taking steps to enhance road safety in the Eluru — Tadepalligudem Sector which inter-alia included the provision of an ambulance.

(c) and (d) A report on the suggestion to set up rest area and the road safety situation in this sector of National Highway No. 5 detailing deficiencies, if any, as also possible remedial measures has been called for from the Andhra Pradesh Government.

As regards provision of ambulance, a proposal to give financial assistance for purchase of one crane and ambulance under the National Highway Patrolling Scheme to the State Government of Andhra Pradesh during the current financial year is under process. Ambulance and crane are not provided on individual request.

राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग नं॰ 8-बी पर पुलों का निर्माण

62. **श्री गोपाल सिंह जी॰ सोलंकी:** क्या जल-भूतल परिवहन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि

(क) गुजरात के वड़ोदरा, पंचमहल, सूरत और भरुच जिलों में मुख्य नदी पर से गुजरने वाले राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग नं॰ 8-बी पर पुल निर्माण संबंधी प्रस्तावों का ब्यौरा क्या है और ये प्रस्ताव कब से लंबित हैं;

(ख) इन प्रस्तावों को अब तक स्वीकृति न दिए जाने के क्या कारण हैं;

(ग) इस प्रस्तावों को कब तक स्वीकृती दिए जाने की संभावता है; और

(घ) क्या इनके लिए आवश्यक आवंटन किया जाएगा?

जल-भूतल परिवहन मंत्री (श्री टी॰ जी॰ वेंकटरामन): (क) से (घ) राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग संख्या 8-ख जो गुजरात राज्य में बामनवोरे से पोरबंदर तक जाता है, प्रसंगवश राज्य के वदोदरा, पंचमहल, सूरत और भरुच जिलों से नहीं गुजरता है। अत: राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग संख्या 8-ख के लिए इन जिलों की मुख्य नदियों पर पुलों के निर्माण के किसी प्रस्ताव का प्रश्न नहीं उठता।

Shortage of staff in departmental canteens of Telecom

63. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department of Telecommunication are following the guidelines issued by the Department of Personnel in respect of number of staff required to man the departmental canteens;

(b) if no, the shortfall in the staff strength in the departmental canteens in the Telecom side;

(c) the steps taken to cover the short fall;

(d) whether Department of Telecommunication have been taken steps to absorb the casual labour who have put in number of years service, in the vacant posts in the departmental canteens; and

(e) if not, whether the Department have taken steps to extend the wages to casual workers of departmental canteens on par with their counterparts in Department?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Pending passport applications in Andhra Pradesh

64. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the backlog of passport applications pending in Andhra Pradesh as on date;

(b) the reason for this backlog; and

(c) by when this backlog is likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) The backlog of passport application, i.e. applications pending for over one month, in Andhra Pradesh as on 13.11.1996 was 20,501.

(b) The backlog arose mainly due to a spurt in the number of applications received in September & October 1996. As against 26,451